

# Where LXR fits in with Hilton's luxury growth plans

05 DECEMBER 2019 9:23 AM

In this Q&A, Hotel News Now spoke with LXR Hotels & Resorts global head Feisal Jaffer to discuss his plans for the boutique-focused luxury brand.



(Photo illustration: Rachel Daub)

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MCLEAN, Virginia—Hilton hit a growth streak with luxury hotel openings in 2019, and LXR Hotels & Resorts global head Feisal Jaffer said his brand will be a part of that continued growth.

Jaffer [joined Hilton](#) as LXR's global head on 3 September, and he most recently served as SVP of business development for Capella Hotel Group. Hilton announced in January that it would expand the LXR brand, and it [debuted in Europe](#) with the 308-key The Biltmore Mayfair in London through a partnership with Millennium & Copthorne Hotels.

In a virtual Q&A session with Hotel News Now, Jaffer said he's "fortunate to have joined Hilton at the right time."

"We are opening more luxury properties in 2019 than in any previous year of (Hilton's) 100-year history," he said via email. "This momentum will continue with Hilton's luxury pipeline of more than 30 properties, approximately 25 of which are expected to open over the next five years."

As of 30 September, Hilton had 72 hotels across its three luxury brands. For the [third quarter of 2019](#), Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts saw occupancy increase 0.1% to 67.8% while average daily rate rose 3.7% to \$239.69. Revenue per available room increased 3.9% to \$239.67.

Conrad Hotels & Resorts reported a 1.2% occupancy increase to 76.8% in the quarter. ADR decreased 2.5% to \$259.13 and RevPAR dipped 1.4% to \$198.89.

Hilton places the quality of properties over the rate at which they grow, and "LXR is no exception," he said, adding that his team focuses on "curating hotels that align with our vision for the brand."

Read through the Q&A to hear more about Jaffer's plans for LXR.

**Q: Can you name a few recent highlights for the brand?**

A: "We have officially opened two magnificent properties in Dubai and London: Al Habtoor Palace and The Biltmore Mayfair. (This) month, our first resort property, Zemi Beach House Hotel & Spa in Anguilla, will be joining the collection, and we are honored to have this world-renowned resort as one of the founding properties in LXR's growing collection."

**Q: How and where do you plan to grow the brand?**

A: "LXR targets the most sought-after destinations in the world. The key consideration is whether we can provide sophisticated and authentic experiences in places where our discerning guests want to travel. We are particularly excited to reveal a few more of our resort properties in the coming months, which will add exotic destinations, depth and diversity to our collection. We are focused on partnering with owners who share our vision and on selecting the 'right' properties to be a part of this exclusive network as opposed to simply expanding at a rapid pace. We are more than willing to wait for the best opportunities and are selectively considering both new-build and renovation projects that elevate our portfolio."

**Q: Can you talk about the structure of the partnership of Hilton and Millennium & Copthorne behind LXR and what that will look like for hotels across the globe? How does the ownership/management relationship of the brand work?**

A: "The Biltmore Mayfair, owned by Millennium & Copthorne Hotels and managed by Hilton as part of LXR Hotels & Resorts, is ... a hotel combining exquisite contemporary accommodation, stunning views across Grosvenor Square and innovative culinary concepts by Michelin-starred restaurateur Jason Atherton. We are focused on partnering with owners who have a shared vision for the LXR brand. We are excited about our excellent relationship with Millennium & Copthorne to provide the best experience for our guests."

"As a brand that connects independent luxury hotels with the benefits of the Hilton enterprise and commercial engines, we expect some properties may prefer to retain their own management. We will therefore offer both franchise and managed models, responding appropriately to our prospective owners' needs. Our goal is that each property continues to flourish independently and maintain its individuality."

**Q: LXR is a brand made up of independent hotels that offers travel experiences that are native to that particular location—how do you plan to make each hotel unique while keeping that boutique, lifestyle experience while being connected to the Hilton engine?**

A: "LXR connects legendary properties into an exclusive network of hotels that are set apart by an unrivaled commitment to personalized attention and luxurious, yet locally immersive experiences for their guests. Each hotel will offer their own unique culinary concepts and wellness programming specific to the destination and heritage of the hotel. We have created a competitive brand offering that will give independent hotel owners an opportunity to retain the individual character and identity of their properties. There is no particular 'house' aesthetic to which hotels must conform."

**Q: From your perspective, what sets LXR apart from Hilton's other luxury brands and other luxury brands in the industry as a whole?**

A: "LXR provides an innovative solution for independent hotel owners to retain their property's storied character and individuality, while at the same time offering the benefits of the Hilton commercial engines, the strength of the award-winning Hilton Honors loyalty program, and the focused attention of our industry experts and ... team members around the world."

"Waldorf Astoria and Conrad properties are respectively united by their consistent brand identities. LXR complements the Waldorf Astoria and Conrad brands to offer the full spectrum of luxury experiences within Hilton's luxury portfolio."